

## 3.1 Aesthetics

This section provides an analysis of the potential impacts of the Project on aesthetic and visual resources within the community. The Project includes the 114 residential detached single-family homes, grading and tree removal activities and the installation of landscaping and lighting. These actions will change the existing appearance of the site, as well as alter viewsheds from surrounding vantage points. The Project will also create temporary construction routes and placement of construction vehicles on-site. This section addresses the significance of these impacts.

### Environmental Setting

The Project site is located within the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* which encompasses an area of approximately 40 square miles at the base of the Sierra Nevada foothills. The Community Plan area is centrally located between the San Francisco Bay and the Lake Tahoe recreation area. More specifically, the Project site is located approximately one and one-half miles north of the Auburn city limits, just east of State Route 49 (SR 49). The site is bordered by the railroad right-of-way and residential development to the north, Canal Street and residential land uses to the east, a PG&E corporation yard to the south and a lumber company and retail/commercial land use to the west.

The Project site is currently undeveloped and can be characterized as generally flat with gentle, grassy slopes and trees. The site slightly slopes upward from southwest to northeast. The site has previously been developed as a lumber mill and therefore has been disturbed. As such, most of the native vegetation was previously removed and the natural landform has been altered. Currently, the site consists of remnant uses including areas of concrete foundations, asphalt paving, concrete roads, parking pads and cut and fill slopes. The concrete and asphalt foundations, pads and roads have not been well maintained and are in varying states of disrepair. Several trees are located on site, primarily along Fiddler Green Canal, along the southwestern and western portion of the site. Two larger trees are located in the southeastern portion of the site. The remainder of the site consists of grasses and weeds.

Fiddler Green Canal traverses the Project site from north to southeast and Wise Canal is located to the southwest and west of the Project site. Both of these canals are used for irrigation.

### Views of Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses

As part of the environmental analysis, photographs of and through the Project site were taken. **Figure 3.1-1** is an aerial photograph of the site with arrows indicating the locations of the pictures showing the Project site and the character of the surrounding land uses. **Figures 3.1-2 through 3.1-6** provide photographs of existing conditions at the site and provide views of the surrounding land uses.

Views 1 and 2 illustrate the views of the Project site and surrounding land uses from the southeast portion of the Project site looking east. Grasses and trees are visible in the foreground of View 1. Residential uses are also slightly visible in the background of View 1. However, views of the

residential uses are obstructed by trees and fencing. View 2 is also taken near the southeast portion of the Project site; however, this photograph was taken further into the property. View 2 shows grasses, trees and a concrete road in the foreground. View 2 provides greater views of the Project site and surrounding land uses in the foreground and background, respectively.

Views 3 and 4 are taken in the center of parcel 052-102-012-000 (as shown on the photograph location map) on the east side of Fiddler Green Canal looking north off-site. Views in the foreground on the Project site include grasses, weeds, rocky ground and bushes. Views in the background are of the residential uses located to the north of the Project site.

View 5 and 6 show Fiddler Green Canal located on the Project site. View 5 was taken from a central vantage point in the Project site and faces north. This view shows the Canal in the foreground and residential uses in the background to the north. View 6 was also taken from a central vantage point in the Project site and faces south. The canal is shown in the foreground and the PG&E construction yard and buildings are shown in the background. Trees shield much of the view of the PG&E buildings. These views illustrate the varied topography that currently exists on the Project site.

Views 7 and 8 are taken from the west side of Fiddler Green Canal looking northeast. View 7 shows the concrete pads in disrepair, scattered bushes, grasses, and weeds in the foreground and residential uses further to the north in the background. The residential uses from this view are highly obscured by vegetation. View 8 shows concrete pads, grasses, trees, and a rocky outcrop in the foreground on the Project site and shows residential uses located off-site to the northeast. From this vantage point the residential uses are shielded by fencing and vegetation. These views also illustrate the varied topography that currently exists on the Project site.

View 9 is taken from the northwest portion of the Project site looking southwest. This view shows concrete pads and grasses in the foreground and utility poles and the lumber yard in the background.

View 10 is taken from the southwest edge of the Project site looking south. This view shows utility poles and a chain link fence in the foreground. Commercial land uses with parking are shown in the background of the photograph.

## Light and Glare

The Project site is in a developed area that is currently illuminated. Nighttime lighting is provided by street lights; lighting associated with retail/commercial signage; building security and parking lots; and, fluorescent light spill from building interiors. Typically, building security lighting and parking lot lighting are shielded and directed downward/inward and shed relatively little light off site. Light sources associated with the adjacent residential uses include street lighting and lighting typical of residential uses such as security lighting, garage or carport lighting, pedestrian walkway lighting and indirect lighting from residential interiors. Automobiles traveling along SR 49 and the roads in the area are a source of transient light in the area.

Sources of daytime glare are typically concentrated on SR 49, the area's primary corridor, and are associated with retail/commercial uses along SR 49. Glare results from development and associated parking areas that contain reflective materials such as glass, highly polished surfaces and expanses of pavement. Sensitive uses affected by nighttime lighting and glare primarily consist of residential uses.



Figure 3.1-1  
Location Map



View 1 : View from the southeast portion of the Project site looking east



View 2 : View from the southeast portion of the Project site looking east

**Figure 3.1-2  
Views 1 and 2**





View 3 : View from the center of Parcel 052-102-000 looking north



View 4 : View from the center of Parcel 052-102-000 looking north

**Figure 3.1-3  
Views 3 and 4**



View 5 : View taken from a central vantage point within the Project site looking north. Fiddler Green Canal is visible in the foreground and residential uses are visible further to the north.



View 6 : View taken from a central vantage point within the Project site looking south. Fiddler Green Canal is visible in the foreground and the PG&E corporation yard is visible further to the south.

**Figure 3.1-4  
Views 5 and 6**



View 7 : View from the western portion of the Project site looking northeast.



View 8 : View from the western portion of the Project site looking northeast.

**Figure 3.1-5**  
**Views 7 and 8**





View 9 : View from the northwest portion of the Project site looking southwest.



View 10 : View from the northwest portion of the Project site looking south.

**Figure 3.1-6**  
**Views 9 and 10**



## Regulatory Setting

The Project site is not within a State scenic highway or other State-recognized visual resource area. Because of this, there is no oversight from a State agency. Placer County has the authority exercised in the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, and where the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* is silent, the *Placer County General Plan*, to regulate aesthetics. Several policies exist in these documents that place aesthetic requirements on new development. These policies are provided below.

### ***Auburn Bowman Community Plan***

#### **Community Development Element**

##### **Community Design**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Goal E</b>     | Encourage compatibility between neighboring land uses.  |
| <b>Goal G</b>     | Create residential development which encourages the following elements: human interaction, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and the creation of a neighborhood identity and/or focus(i.e., parks, schools, natural open space areas, creeks, sites of historical or archaeological significance, etc.) within the proposed development and surrounding environment.  |
| <b>Goal H</b>     | Maintain the character of established residential areas.  |
| <b>Goal I</b>     | Discourage isolated, remote and walled-off developments that do not contribute to a desired sense of community for the entire area.   |
| <b>Goal J</b>     | Preserve the natural land forms, natural vegetation, and natural resources of the area as much as possible. It is recognized that development of commercial, industrial, and higher density residential uses can result in the loss of naturally occurring amenities. Where this is allowed to occur, adherence to a set of community design guidelines should assist in mitigating such impacts.   |
| <b>Policy 3A1</b> | Where appropriate, natural features should be retained as buffers between different, potentially incompatible uses as well as serving to preserve the rural character of the area. Maintain the heavily vegetated corridors that exist along circulation routes to preserve their rural nature and their perceived value as natural buffers. Where natural features are not available, landscaped buffer yards should be provided to minimize the adverse effects of higher intensity uses. |
| <b>Policy 3A3</b> | Landscaping should be used to reduce the visual impact of all structures, including solid fences. Natural vegetation should dominate where possible. Where existing vegetation is inadequate, the use of native plant materials is encouraged. Landscaping materials should provide an informal character and smooth transition between buildings, parking lots adjoining roadways and open areas   |

- Policy 3A5** Commercial and residential site layouts should be designed with the intent to encourage human interaction, and to be compatible with the surrounding environment, versus designs which solely accommodate automobile usage; pedestrian walkways should be provided between commercial and residential areas.
- Policy 3A8** Where possible, preserve native trees and support the use of native and/or drought tolerant plant materials in all revegetation/landscaping projects.
- Policy 3A25** In urban and suburban subdivisions, frontage (street) trees should be required on a per lot basis to provide future canopy coverage of neighborhood streets.
- Policy 3A26** Whenever feasible, new multifamily and other higher density single family residential development projects should be oriented toward adjacent roadways to tie the development in with the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Population and Housing**

- Policy H** Encourage developments which create a sense of community by fostering human interaction through subdivision design, pathways to adjoining neighborhoods and adjacent commercial areas, interconnecting trails systems, in-tract recreation opportunities, etc.
- Policy O** Whenever feasible, new multifamily and other higher density single-family residential development projects should be oriented toward adjacent roadways to tie the development in with the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Policy Q** Discourage the appearance of creating walled-off communities such as is done through the use of sound walls along roadways where noise impacts can be appropriately mitigated in an alternative way.

### **Noise**

- Policy H** Where noise mitigation measures are required to achieve the standards of Tables 15 and 16, the emphasis of such measures shall be placed upon site planning and project design. The use of noise barriers shall be considered a means of achieving the noise standards only after all other practical design-related noise mitigation measures have been integrated into the project.

### **Environmental Resources Management Element**

#### **Open Space**

- Goal G** Conserve visual resources of the community, including important vistas and wooded areas.

#### **Vegetation**

- Policy B2** Conserve the natural landscape, including minimizing disturbance to natural terrain and vegetation, as an important consideration in the design of any subdivision or land development project.

**Policy B9** Use native and compatible non-native species, especially drought resistant species, to the extent possible in fulfilling landscaping requirements imposed as conditions or discretionary permits.

**Policy B11** Preserve and protect landmark trees and major groves of native trees.

### Transportation and Circulation Element

**Policy 17** In residential areas, concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk shall be provided on both sides of roadways where lot sizes are 1/2 acre or smaller. In areas with lot sizes between 1/2 acre and 40,000 sq. ft., concrete curb and gutter shall be provided on both sides of the roadway; concrete sidewalk shall be provided on one side of the roadway. In areas with lot sizes larger than 40,000 sq. ft., an off-street, multipurpose walkway shall be provided together with 4' (min.) wide paved roadway shoulders.

Placer County requires nighttime lighting fixtures to comply with the guidelines provided in the *Placer County Design Guidelines Manual* (Placer County 1996). These guidelines include:

- A Maximum height for building and freestanding lighting should not exceed 14 feet.
- B If property is adjacent to a residential area or residentially zoned property, the lighting should not interfere with these areas.
- C Lighting shall be directed away from adjacent roadways and shall not interfere with traffic or create a traffic hazard.
- D Upward lighting shall be minimized to the greatest extent possible.
- E All outdoor lighting associated with the proposed mine expansion project shall adhere to the following guidelines to minimize light and glare to surrounding areas:
  - 1. Parking lot and other security lighting shall be top and side shielded to prevent the light pattern from shining onto adjacent property or roadways, excluding lights used for illumination of public roads.
  - 2. External lights used to illuminate the side of a building or wall shall be shielded to prevent the light from shining off the surface intended to be illuminated. Bottom lighting shall be prohibited.
  - 3. Lights that shine onto a road in a manner that causes excessive glare and may be considered to be a traffic hazard shall be prohibited.
  - 4. Outdoor floodlights shall not be projected above the horizontal plane.
  - 5. Lighting or outdoor display areas shall be turned off within 1 hour after the closing of the operation. Security lighting may remain on after the close of business.

## Methodology

To determine the potential visual impacts related to the proposed Project, sensitive viewers who would have views of the proposed Project were identified. These sensitive viewers include residential uses. Existing views of the Project site from these sensitive land uses were compared with the views of the site anticipated with the proposed Project.



## Thresholds of Significance

Impacts would be considered significant if the Project:

- Creates a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area;
- Produces light or glare that could create hazards or nuisances.
- Is inconsistent with Auburn-Bowman Community Plan or *Placer County General Plan* standards for protection of scenic resources;
- Substantially alters existing selected viewsheds; or,
- Results in the obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public, or in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view.

## Environmental Impact and Mitigation Measures

### Impact AVR-1                      Consistency with the Community Plan and Placer County Design Guidelines Aesthetic Policies

The *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* and the *Placer County Design Guidelines* include multiple policies adopted to protect visual resources within Placer County and in the area of the Project. Applicable goals and policies stated under the Regulatory Setting heading in this section (pages 3.1-4 to 3.1-6) are analyzed for consistency in **Table 3.1-1** below.

The Project is consistent with a majority of aesthetics policies set forth in applicable regulatory plans. This Section provides mitigation measures to ensure that the Project is aesthetically compatible with the surrounding land uses and consistent with applicable regulatory goals and policies. Mitigation measures have been added which reduce most of the potentially adverse visual impacts. Overall, the Project is in compliance with adopted aesthetics policies.

As detailed in Section 3.3 Biological Resources, large oak trees are scattered throughout the Project site with most of the trees and woody vegetation concentrated along the southeastern periphery of Fiddler Green Canal. The proposed Project will result in the removal of approximately 55 trees (53 of which are oaks) with a diameter of six inches or greater (see Section 3.3 for native tree off-site removal standards and applicable mitigation measures). The removal of the oaks and other large trees from the Project site is not consistent with the *Auburn Bowman Community Plan*, Goal G and Policies B2 and B11 which seek to preserve and protect valuable vegetation resources within Placer County. Even with landscaping incorporated into the Project design around fences on the outer portion of the Project site, visual impacts associated with the tree removal are considered **significant and unavoidable**. Mitigation measure AVR-1 below would help reduce adverse impacts.

**Table 3.1-1**  
**Consistency with Relevant General Plan/Community Plan Aesthetic Policies**

<b>Goal, Policy, or Objective</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Auburn/Bowman Community Plan</b>	
<b>Community Development Element</b>	
<b>Community Design</b>	
<b>Goal E</b> Encourage compatibility between neighboring land uses.	The Project site is located in an area with existing development. The Project site is surrounded by commercial uses to the south and west and residential uses to the north and east. All existing land uses in the site vicinity are accessible via public roads and access ways. The Project includes the construction of a solid fence approximately six feet in height which will be constructed on those portions of the site adjacent to the railroad tracks, Wise Canal, the PG&E corporation yard, and along Canal Street. A new fence will be erected on the property line with the existing residential area to the north. A gate will be provided at the entrance of the Project site. Views of the Project site would be altered with Project implementation; however, the Project will be aesthetically compatible with the existing surrounding land uses.
<b>Goal G</b> Create residential development which encourages the following elements: human interaction, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and the creation of a neighborhood identity and/or focus(i.e., parks, schools, natural open space areas, creeks, sites of historical or archaeological significance, etc.) Within the proposed development and surrounding environment.	The Project Description does not provide information relative to building design or placement, porches, or other design elements that might promote interaction between residents of the Project site. The Project does propose a gate at the entrance to the Project site, which would discourage coincidental interaction with neighbors. Pedestrian walkways are not proposed to link the Project site with planned commercial areas along SR 49.
<b>Goal H</b> Maintain the character of established residential areas.	Although exact building design and design elements are not available at the time of the writing of this EIR, the homes are anticipated to range in size from 1,300 to 2,500 square feet with single- and double-car garages and may be single- and two-story. The proposed residential Project would not be out of scale, size or character with the surrounding residential land uses and would be compatible with the existing commercial uses located to the south and west of the site. Therefore, aesthetic impacts related to views of the Project site from surrounding land uses would be less than significant.

Goal, Policy, or Objective	Discussion
<p><b>Goal I</b> Discourage isolated, remote and walled-off developments that do not contribute to a desired sense of community for the entire area.</p>	<p>The Project includes the construction of a solid fence approximately six feet in height which will be constructed on those portions of the site adjacent to the railroad tracks, Wise Canal, the PG&amp;E corporation yard, and along Canal Street. A new fence will be erected on the property line with the existing residential area to the north. A gate will be provided at the entrance of the Project site.</p>
<p><b>Goal J</b> Preserve the natural land forms, natural vegetation, and natural resources of the area as much as possible. It is recognized that development of commercial, industrial, and higher density residential uses can result in the loss of naturally occurring amenities. Where this is allowed to occur, adherence to a set of community design guidelines should assist in mitigating such impacts.</p>	<p>The site consists of remnant uses including areas of concrete foundations, asphalt paving, concrete roads, parking pads, and cut and fill slopes. The concrete and asphalt foundations, pads, and roads have not been well maintained and are in varying states of disrepair. This existing condition does not enhance views of the site. The proposed Project would change the visual character of the site; however, Project development would be consistent with surrounding land uses and would not degrade the existing visual quality of the surrounding area. In addition, the Project site does not contain any important vistas or wooded areas. Landscaping requirements are identified in mitigation in this EIR.</p>
<p><b>Policy 3A1</b> Where appropriate, natural features should be retained as buffers between different, potentially incompatible uses as well as serving to preserve the rural character of the area. Maintain the heavily vegetated corridors that exist along circulation routes to preserve their rural nature and their perceived value as natural buffers. Where natural features are not available, landscaped buffer yards should be provided to minimize the adverse effects of higher intensity uses.</p>	<p>The Project includes the construction of a solid fence approximately six feet in height which will be constructed on those portions of the site adjacent to the railroad tracks, Wise Canal, the PG&amp;E corporation yard, and along Canal Street. A new fence will be erected on the property line with the existing residential area to the north. A gate will be provided at the entrance of the Project site. Landscaping requirements are identified in mitigation in this EIR.</p>
<p><b>Policy 3A3</b> Landscaping should be used to reduce the visual impact of all structures, including solid fences. Natural vegetation should dominate where possible. Where existing vegetation is inadequate, the use of native plant materials is encouraged. Landscaping materials should provide an informal character and smooth transition between buildings, parking lots adjoining roadways and open areas.</p>	<p>Oak trees that currently exist on the Project site will not be preserved as part of the proposed Project. Approximately 55 trees with a diameter of six inches or greater will be removed. These trees are located in the southeastern portion of the site.</p>
<p><b>Policy 3A5</b> Commercial and residential site layouts should be designed with the intent to encourage human interaction, and to be compatible with the surrounding</p>	<p>The Project Description does not provide information relative to building design or placement, porches, or other design elements that might promote interaction</p>



Goal, Policy, or Objective	Discussion
environment, versus designs which solely accommodate automobile usage; pedestrian walkways should be provided between commercial and residential areas.	between residents of the Project site. The Project does propose a gate at the entrance to the Project site, which would discourage coincidental interaction with neighbors. Pedestrian walkways are not proposed to link the Project site with planned commercial areas along SR 49.
<b>Policy 3A8</b> Where possible, preserve native trees and support the use of native and/or drought tolerant plant materials in all revegetation/landscaping projects.	Oak trees that currently exist on the Project site will not be preserved as part of the proposed Project, except for two of the largest ones. Approximately 55 trees with diameter of six inches or greater will be removed. These trees are located in the southeastern portion of the site.
<b>Policy 3A25</b> In urban and suburban subdivisions, frontage (street) trees should be required on a per lot basis to provide future canopy coverage of neighborhood streets.	As stated previously, oak trees that currently exist on the Project site will not be preserved as part of the proposed Project. Landscaping requirements are identified in mitigation in this EIR.
<b>Policy 3A26</b> Whenever feasible, new multifamily and other higher density single family residential development projects should be oriented toward adjacent roadways to tie the development in with the surrounding neighborhood.	The Project is proposed to be gated. Access to the proposed residential community will be from Canal Street through a single access point at the southern point of contact with Canal Street. A four-foot wide sidewalk will be provided on each side of all streets. Secondary, emergency access will be from the west across one of the two existing bridges and easements over the Wise Canal.
<b>Population and Housing</b>	
<b>Policy H</b> Encourage developments which create a sense of community by fostering human interaction through subdivision design, pathways to adjoining neighborhoods and adjacent commercial areas, interconnecting trails systems, in-tract recreation opportunities, etc.	The Project Description does not provide information relative to building design or placement, porches, or other design elements that might promote interaction between residents of the Project site. The Project does propose a gate at the entrance to the Project site, which would discourage coincidental interaction with neighbors. Pedestrian walkways are not proposed to link the Project site with planned commercial areas along SR 49.
<b>Policy O</b> Whenever feasible, new multifamily and other higher density single-family residential development projects should be oriented toward adjacent roadways to tie the development in with the surrounding neighborhoods.	The Project is proposed to be gated. Access to the proposed residential community will be from Canal Street through a single access point at the southern point of contact with Canal Street. A four-foot wide sidewalk will be provided on each side of all streets. Secondary, emergency access will be from the west across one of the two existing bridges and easements

Goal, Policy, or Objective	Discussion
	over the Wise Canal.
<p><b>Policy Q</b> Discourage the appearance of creating walled-off communities such as is done through the use of sound walls along roadways where noise impacts can be appropriately mitigated in an alternative way.</p>	<p>The Project includes the construction of a solid fence approximately six feet in height which will be constructed on those portions of the site adjacent to the railroad tracks, Wise Canal, the PG&amp;E corporation yard, and along Canal Street. A new fence will be erected on the property line with the existing residential area to the north. A gate will be provided at the entrance of the Project site. Views of the Project site would be altered with Project implementation; however, the Project will be aesthetically compatible with the existing surrounding land uses.</p>
<b>Noise</b>	
<p><b>Policy H</b> Where noise mitigation measures are required to achieve the standards of Tables 15 and 16, the emphasis of such measures shall be placed upon site planning and project design. The use of noise barriers shall be considered a means of achieving the noise standards only after all other practical design-related noise mitigation measures have been integrated into the project.</p>	<p>The Noise section of this EIR, Section 3.7, commissions further study of the noise effects of the PG&amp;E corporation yard and The Plaza to ensure that no unnecessary physical barriers of an unnecessarily excessive height are constructed to mitigate noise from these sources unless this is the only feasible mitigation possible. The Project is very close to several considerable noise sources, and soundwalls are a part of some mitigation measures in the Noise section only because no other means of mitigating the effect of these sources is feasible.</p>
<b>Environmental Resources Management Element</b>	
<b>Open Space</b>	
<p><b>Goal G</b> Conserve visual resources of the community, including important vistas and wooded areas.</p>	<p>The site consists of remnant uses including areas of concrete foundations, asphalt paving, concrete roads, parking pads and cut and fill slopes. The concrete and asphalt foundations, pads and roads have not been well maintained and are in varying states of disrepair. This existing condition does not enhance views of the site. The proposed Project would change the visual character of the site; however, Project development would be consistent with surrounding land uses and would not degrade the existing visual quality of the surrounding area. In addition, the Project site does not contain any important vistas and wooded areas. Therefore, aesthetic impacts related to views of the Project site from surrounding land uses would be less than significant.</p>

Goal, Policy, or Objective	Discussion
<b>Vegetation</b>	
<p><b>Policy B2</b> Conserve the natural landscape, including minimizing disturbance to natural terrain and vegetation, as an important consideration in the design of any subdivision or land development project.</p>	<p>The Project site is currently undeveloped and can be characterized as generally flat with gentle, grassy slopes and trees. The site has previously been developed as a lumber mill and therefore has been disturbed. As such, most of the native vegetation was previously removed, and the natural landform has been altered. As part of the proposed Project, approximately 55 trees with diameter of six inches or greater will be removed. Landscaping will be incorporated into the Project design around fences on the outer portion of the Project site. The existing vegetation has been removed and the natural landform previously altered and since the Project design will incorporate landscaping in the design of the development, this impact will be less than significant.</p>
<p><b>Policy B9</b> Use native and compatible non-native species, especially drought resistant species, to the extent possible in fulfilling landscaping requirements imposed as conditions of discretionary permits.</p>	<p>The oak trees currently on-site will not be preserved as part of the proposed Project. Landscaping requirements are identified in mitigation in this EIR.</p>
<p><b>Policy B11</b> Preserve and protect landmark trees and major groves of native trees.</p>	<p>Oak trees that currently exist on the Project site will not be preserved as part of the proposed Project, except for two of the largest oaks. Approximately 55 trees with diameter of six inches or greater will be removed. These trees are located in the southeastern portion of the site. The Project site does not contain any important vistas or wooded areas. Landscaping requirements are identified in mitigation in this EIR.</p>
<b>Transportation and Circulation Element</b>	
<p>In residential areas, concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk shall be provided on both sides of roadways where lot sizes are 1/2 acre or smaller. In areas with lot sizes between 1/2 acre and 40,000 sq. ft., concrete curb and gutter shall be provided on both sides of the roadway; concrete sidewalk shall be provided on one side of the roadway. In areas with lot sizes larger than 40,000 sq. ft., an off-street, multipurpose walkway shall be provided together with 4' (min.) wide paved roadway shoulders.</p>	<p>Project lot sizes are smaller than 1/2 acre. Concrete curbs and gutters will be provided on both sides of the roadway. Sidewalks will be provided along every roadway.</p>
<b>Placer County Design Guidelines</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum height for building and freestanding lighting should not exceed 14 feet.</li> </ul>	<p>At this time the site plans, including lighting plans, have not been prepared for the proposed Project. Lighting</p>



Goal, Policy, or Objective	Discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If property is adjacent to a residential area or residentially zoned property, the lighting should not interfere with these areas.</li> <li>• Lighting shall be directed away from adjacent roadways and shall not interfere with traffic or create a traffic hazard.</li> <li>• Upward lighting shall be minimized to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>• All outdoor lighting associated with the proposed mine expansion project shall adhere to the following guidelines to minimize light and glare to surrounding areas:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parking lot and other security lighting shall be top and side shielded to prevent the light pattern from shining onto adjacent property or roadways, excluding lights used for illumination of public roads.</li> <li>2. External lights used to illuminate the side of a building or wall shall be shielded to prevent the light from shining off the surface intended to be illuminated. Bottom lighting shall be prohibited.</li> <li>3. Lights that shine onto a road in a manner that causes excessive glare and may be considered to be a traffic hazard shall be prohibited.</li> <li>4. Outdoor floodlights shall not be projected above the horizontal plane.</li> <li>5. Lighting or outdoor display areas shall be turned off within 1 hour after the closing of the operation. Security lighting may remain on after the close of business.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p>will be designed to not interfere with existing residential and commercial uses to the maximum extent feasible. See mitigation measures AVR-1 and AVR-2 below to ensure compliance with County Design Guidelines.</p>

## Mitigation Measure AVR-1

**Prior to final site plan approval, the Project applicant shall submit a final landscaping plan to the County for its review and approval. In compliance with *Placer County General Plan Policy 6.D.2*, the final landscaping plan shall include the use of native and compatible non-native species, especially drought-tolerant plant species where possible. The County may attach conditions of approval to the landscaping plans deemed necessary to mitigate potential adverse visual impacts. The landscaping plan, with any attached conditions, shall be incorporated within the Project.**

Implementation of the above mitigation measure would help to reduce adverse impacts associated with the proposed tree removal; however, the impact cannot be reduced to a less than significant

level. The Project still remains inconsistent with Goal G in the Auburn/Bowman Community Plan to conserve visual resources of the community, including important vistas and wooded areas. Therefore, aesthetic impacts related to tree removal are considered **significant and unavoidable**.

## Impact AVR-2                      Nighttime Light Spillage and Glare Produced by Project

Light spillage refers to the amount of light generated on the Project site that is visible from adjacent properties. Light that “spills” over onto adjacent properties can be a visual nuisance to other property owners and users. Major sources of light associated with the Project would likely include street lighting along Canal Street and interior street lighting and exterior lighting on individual residential lots.

Exterior residential security lights found along most residential streets within this area are considered both common and necessary for residential areas. The impact of such lighting on adjacent residential uses is negligible, as these areas also utilize such light sources. Project lighting will be directed downward and inward to the extent possible to limit lighting impacts on nearby uses, yet provide for adequate safety and security, as required by the County’s existing regulations governing lighting. However, the Project will introduce new sources of light and glare on the Project site. Therefore, impacts related to nighttime light spillage are considered **potentially significant** and require mitigation.

Light impacts usually occur from artificial lighting during nighttime hours from both stationary sources such as street lights and mobile sources such as automobile headlights. Residential land uses are considered to be light sensitive at nighttime because lighting spillover can interfere with sleep and privacy expectations. Use of lighting during the night can result in the production of glare, which reduces visibility of the sky, both at the point of light generation and in its surrounding areas. No standards related to glare or its impacts have been adopted by the County, and there is no universally accepted method of quantifying glare impacts. While some glare would inevitably occur from nighttime lighting within the Project, the overall impact is minimized by the location of urban land uses adjacent to the Project site. The resulting change in glare at the Project site and from surrounding properties is not likely to alter nighttime views substantially. The overall impact of nighttime glare is considered to be **less than significant**, and no mitigation is proposed.

Daytime glare may also occur, reducing visibility and posing potential safety hazards. A major source of daytime glare is the construction of large structures that use reflective materials or colors that more readily reflect sunlight. The Project proposes the construction of a solid fence approximately six feet in height which will be constructed on those portions of the Project site adjacent to the railroad tracks, Wise Canal, the PG&E corporation yard, and along Canal Street. A new fence will be constructed along the northern property boundary with the existing residential area to the north. Also, individual housing could be a source of glare through the use of reflective construction materials. The type of building materials the applicant may use will also be determined by existing County glare prevention regulations. Although building materials are not anticipated to be reflective, the proposed Project will increase glare and reflection over current conditions. Daytime glare impacts are considered **potentially significant** and require mitigation.

Glare is typically associated with the reflection of sunlight or artificial lighting on reflective building surfaces. Daytime glare is common in urban areas, characterized by building surfaces that include highly reflective glass or metallic materials. Nighttime glare can result from the reflection of artificial light sources such as automobile headlights onto reflective building materials. As with light impacts, residences are considered a glare sensitive land use. Project generated light and glare could have the potential to adversely impact the day or nighttime lighting environment through the creation of new light or glare sources. Whether new Project light and glare impacts exceed the threshold of significance is dependent upon the type of exterior building materials and the extent of exterior lighting spillover to streets and surrounding structures. With incorporation of mitigation measures these potential impacts can be reduced to a **less than significant** level.

### **Mitigation Measure AVR-2a**

**Prior to final site plan approval, the developer shall submit plans and specifications for all exterior materials to the County Planning Department for review and approval to ensure that no exterior building materials or window glass treatments would create uncomfortable light or glare impacts to any public or private roadways or surrounding property improvements. No exterior building surface shall consist of any reflective metallic surfaces.**

### **Mitigation Measure AVR-2b**

**All new lighting features shall be directed away from the adjacent residential uses and highly finished surfaces that could generate glare. The developer shall submit a lighting plan, including any lighting proposed for signage or landscape accents, for review by the County. This plan shall be approved by the Planning Department and determined to be sufficient to mitigate any adverse lighting effects prior to the issuance of occupancy permits.**

Mitigation measure AVR-1 and AVR-2 above would reduce the amount of light and glare impacts that could potentially be generated by the Project, as well as bring the Project into compliance with the aesthetics policies of the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*. With implementation of the above mitigation measure, light and glare impacts are considered **less than significant**.

### **Impact AVR-3:                      Impact on Views from Areas Surrounding Project Site**

Development on the site will cover the Project site from Canal Street to the existing property boundary with PG&E to the south, PG&E and Wise Canal to the west, and residential development to the north. Development consists of approximately 114 residential parcels containing single-family detached homes.

Various aspects of Project development have the potential to alter views from the Project site. Grading activities and construction of buildings have the greatest potential for creating such impacts. Existing views are limited by surrounding developments, including residential homes on the east and north and commercial development on the west and south. The following discussion considers the potential of the Project to alter views from residential areas around the Project site.

Visual impacts associated with construction of the various components of the Project will be considerable but will be short term in duration. Views will consist of construction equipment, transport trucks, construction materials, piles of dirt and grading, trenching, earthwork and structural building activities. Construction equipment will vary depending on the type of component to be constructed but is anticipated to include compactors, bulldozers, scrapers, front loaders, trenchers, cranes, water trucks, dump trucks, and delivery trucks. Because these construction impacts are short term, they are considered to be **less than significant**.

The existing Project site is currently undeveloped and can be characterized as generally flat with gentle, grassy slopes and trees. The site has been previously developed as a lumber mill and therefore has been disturbed. As such, most of the native vegetation was previously removed and the natural landform has been altered. Currently, the site consists of remnant uses including areas of concrete foundations, asphalt paving, concrete roads, parking pads and cut and fill slopes. The concrete and asphalt foundations, pads and roads have not been well maintained and are in varying states of disrepair. This existing condition does not enhance views of the site. Grading activities would occur on all portions of the site. Because no hill forms or other unique topographic features would be significantly altered or removed as part of site grading, these activities are not expected to contribute to a significant alteration of existing views from adjacent properties.

The proposed Project would include the removal of 53 oak and two pine trees on the site and would add 114 homes to the site. This would alter views of the site from neighboring residences and from State Highway 49.

The proposed Project would change the visual character of the site. Therefore, views from the surrounding area would be substantially changed compared to existing conditions. However, Project development would be consistent with surrounding land uses and would not degrade the existing visual quality of the surrounding area. The impact of the proposed residential development on existing views would not be considered to be adverse because the proposed development is suburban residential and would not be out of character with the immediate existing suburban setting. Also, the Project will have the beneficial effect of developing this property and improving the appearance of the Project site over its existing condition. However, the removal of trees and the addition of many residences to an area that currently provides a view of mainly undeveloped lands and trees will impact the views of the site from surrounding residences and from State Highway 49. The impact is **potentially significant** with or without mitigation.

### **Mitigation Measure AVR-3**

**The applicant shall submit a tree planting plan to the Placer County Planning Department that will include tree plantings that will, within several years time, result in views of the Project site from surrounding residences and from State Highway 49 that include more tree canopies than rooftops.**

The above mitigation measure reduces the impact on views from areas surrounding the Project site to a level that is **less than significant**.

## Impact AVR-4                      Change in Visual Character of Project Site

The proposed Project would substantially alter the existing visual character of the Project site. The proposed development includes the development of single-family homes and would not exceed a maximum of 30 feet in height; therefore, the proposed Project would not be out of size or scale with the existing surrounding residential land uses. Views of the Project site would be altered with Project implementation; however, the Project will be aesthetically compatible with the existing surrounding land uses. Similar to the surrounding setting, the Project would include low-density single-family residential units. A solid fence approximately six feet in height will be constructed on those portions of the site adjacent to the railroad tracks, Wise Canal, the PG&E corporation yard, and along Canal Street. A new fence will be erected on the property line with the existing residential area to the north. Buffering will be provided along the western portion of the Project site between the commercial uses and the Project site. In addition, landscaping will be incorporated into the Project design around fences on the outer portion of the Project site. A gate will be provided at the entrance of the Project site.

Development of the Project would result in the creation of residential homes, landscaping, and associated improvements. While this would represent a significant change in the visual character of the site, the *Placer County General Plan* and other regulatory documents have not identified this landscape type as a scenic or visual resource to be protected. The conversion of the visual character from vacant to suburban in appearance, while notable, does not represent a significant impact on the environment and is consistent with similar development in the surrounding community. Therefore, the impact is considered **less than significant**.